

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) An interlabial pad with a size, weight, and flexibility capable of being held between labia by pinching a part or the whole portion of the interlabial pad naturally therebetween, having a first axis that is substantially parallel to an anteroposterior axis of a wearer, and a second axis which is included in a horizontal plane when the wearer is standing and perpendicular to the first axis, the interlabial pad further comprising:

an absorbent body for absorbing body fluid, the absorbent body having one or a plurality of bending elements including a slit formed on a surface of the absorbent body with a prescribed length and depth, the bending elements being provided in a prescribed position of the absorbent body with a smaller bending strength compared to positions other than the prescribed position, in order to make the absorbent body easy to bend into a U-shape along the first axis or an S-shape along the second axis; and

a coating material enclosing the absorbent body, and maintaining an effect of the bending elements, the coating material defining a main form of the interlabial pad, wherein

a surface of the coating material is not provided with the slit-like processing, and
the absorbent body includes one or a plurality of bending elements including a slit formed with a prescribed length and depth, the bending elements provided in a prescribed position of the interlabial pad and formed of a part with a smaller bending strength compared to parts other than the prescribed position one of the bending elements is formed in a bending element piece in which the slit is extended, the bending element piece including a vertical bending element piece that is extended in a direction that is substantially parallel to the second axis.

2. (currently amended) The interlabial pad according to claim 1, wherein the bending element is formed of a bending element piece in which the slit is extended, and the bending element piece is a vertical bending element piece being extended substantially parallel with the second axis, the the one vertical bending element piece has [[having]] a plurality of slits arranged to cross a center line of the interlabial pad, which lies along the first axis of the interlabial pad.

3. (previously presented) The interlabial pad according to claim 2, wherein each slit has a length of 3 to 30 mm and a breadth of 5 mm or less, and a distance between each parallel adjacent slit is 3 to 20 mm.

4. (previously presented) The interlabial pad according to claim 1, wherein: the bending element is formed of a bending element piece in which the slit is extended; and the absorbent body of the interlabial pad comprises a plurality of the bending element pieces being extended for a prescribed length in a state where the pieces are positioned substantially parallel with each other so that, when the absorbent body is extended flat, the plurality of bending element pieces appear to be in a checkboard pattern.

5. (previously presented) The interlabial pad according to claim 1, wherein: the bending element is formed of a bending element piece in which the slit is extended; and a plurality of the bending element pieces are arranged in a line that is symmetrical with respect to the center line of the interlabial pad, which lies along the first axis of the interlabial pad.

6. (previously presented) The interlabial pad according to claim 1, wherein the bending element is formed of a bending element piece in which the slit is extended; and the bending element piece is a parallel bending element piece being extended substantially parallel with the first axis.

7. (previously presented) The interlabial pad according to claim 1, wherein the parallel bending element piece is arranged near the center line of the interlabial pad, which lies along the first axis of the interlabial pad.

8. (previously presented) The interlabial pad according to claim 1, wherein the bending element is formed of a bending element piece in which the slit is extended, and the bending element piece is arranged to reach the peripheral edges of the absorbent body.

9. (previously presented) The interlabial pad according to claim 1, wherein said bending element is formed of a first bending element piece and a second bending element piece, in which the slit is extended in both the first bending element piece and the second bending element piece, wherein:

the first bending element piece is extended for a first prescribed length, is substantially parallel with the second axis, and is positioned to cross the center line of the interlabial pad, which lies along the first axis;

the second bending element piece is extended for a second prescribed length, is substantially parallel with the first axis, and is positioned near the center line of the interlabial pad; and

the first bending element piece and the second bending element piece cross each other near the center line of the interlabial pad.

10. (previously presented) The interlabial pad according to claim 1, wherein the bending element is formed of a bending element piece in which the slit is extended; and the bending element piece is positioned, in the direction of the second axis, halfway between a center part positioned near the center line of the interlabial pad and peripheral edges of the interlabial pad, and extends for a prescribed length that is substantially parallel with the first axis.

11. (previously presented) The interlabial pad according to claim 1, wherein the bending element is formed of a bending element piece in which the slit is extended, and wherein the bending element is positioned near the center line of the interlabial pad and extends in a V-shape towards the peripheral edges of the absorbent body from the second axis at a prescribed angle.

12. (previously presented) The interlabial pad according to claim 1, wherein the bending element is formed of a bending element piece in which the slit is extended, and the bending element piece extends for a prescribed length and at a prescribed angle to the first axis.

13. (previously presented) The interlabial pad according to claim 1, wherein the bending element includes a low density portion.

14. (previously presented) The interlabial pad according to claim 1, wherein an opposite side surface to a body of the interlabial pad comprises a mini sheet piece which is provided over one side part to another side part, wherein both side parts are substantially parallel to the first axis of the interlabial pad; and a finger insert hole is formed between the mini sheet piece and the opposite side surface to the body.

15. (previously presented) The interlabial pad according to claim 1, wherein the interlabial pad is a pad for an incontinence of urine.

16. (previously presented) The interlabial pad according to claim 1, wherein the interlabial pad is a pad for absorbing vaginal discharge.

17. (currently amended) A method of adjusting a form flexibility used for an interlabial pad with a size, weight, flexibility capable of being held between labia by a part or the whole portion of the interlabial pad being naturally inserted therebetween, having a first axis that is substantially parallel to an anteroposterior axis of a wearer, and a second axis which is included in a horizontal plane when the wearer is standing and is perpendicular to the first axis, [[further]] comprising:

an absorbent body for absorbing body fluid and a coating material for enclosing said absorbent body, the [[said]] absorbent body defining a main form of the interlabial pad; and one or a plurality of bending elements including a slit formed with a prescribed length and depth, provided in a prescribed position of the interlabial pad with a lower bending strength compared to a part other

than the prescribed position, in order to make the absorbent body easy to bend into a U-shape along the first axis or an S-shape along the second axis.

wherein one of the bending elements is formed in a bending element piece in which the slit is extended, the bending element piece including a vertical bending element piece that is extended in a direction that is substantially parallel to the second axis, the method comprising [[comprises]] the step of:

adjusting the form flexibility of the interlabial pad by a bending element application method using the bending element.

18. (previously presented) The method of adjusting a form flexibility according to claim 17, wherein the bending element application method comprises the step of changing the form, number, positioning area, and arrangement of the bending element.